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Fiftieth Session

109th plenary meeting
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Official Records

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Diallo (Mauritania), Vice-President, took the chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 12 (continued)

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/847)

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance on its twelfth meeting (A/50/525)

Letter from the President of the Economic and Social Council to the President of the General Assembly (A/50/926)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.69)

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): This morning the General Assembly will continue its plenary meetings devoted to public administration and development.

I call first upon the Permanent Representative of Singapore.

Mr. Kausikan (Singapore): It is a conceit of professional economists to believe that economic

development depends primarily on economic science. Clearly, this is, at best, an over-simplification. In fact, professional economists have not been noticeably successful in managing real economies. Ever since 1969, when the Nobel Prize in economics was first awarded, no Nobel Prize for economic science has been given to an economist working in a high-growth economy of East Asia. I offer this observation for what it is worth, and also as another means of congratulating the Government of Morocco and the Department for Development Support and Management Services on organizing this resumed session of the General Assembly on an aspect of the urgent problem of economic development that has not received sufficient attention.

The 1993 World Bank report entitled "The East Asian Miracle" revealed that the miracle was not such a miracle after all. The secret was in getting the macroeconomic fundamentals right. This has been known for decades. The globalization of the world economy has even more sharply focused development issues that policy makers and theoreticians have grappled with for years. The purely economic debate over appropriate development strategies is now, in a real sense, over. Opting out is clearly not an option. It would only accelerate the pace of marginalization.

But if the economics of development is now somewhat better understood, it is still a fact that there has been no, or little, growth in much of the world. The difference has been in public policy. Developing countries that tried to follow the East Asian model have

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failed, not because they did not know what the correct policies were, but because they lacked the socio-political underpinnings to make such policies stick. It is in providing these underpinnings that the role of the public sector and government — which I define as both the system of politics and the system of administration — is most critical to the development process. And the most important of the socio-political underpinnings of economic development are political stability and good governance. It is government in the public sector that will determine whether a country can plug into the fast-moving global economy or whether it will be bypassed.

Of course, pundits of all colours have, somewhat belatedly, now picked upon “good government” as the catchphrase of the day. Here I would like to flag another phenomenon for the attention of my colleagues. Western intellectuals, and even administrators and businessmen, have a tendency to think of developing country institutions more or less in terms of their own. This is perhaps natural. But it has given rise to fierce debates — of an almost theological flavour — over what constitutes good government. I characterize these debates as theological because, more often than not, they are on the theory of what constitutes good government rather than on the practice.

Needless to say, the acid test of any government in the real world is not its adherence to any particular political theory or ideal, but whether it can govern effectively, fairly and in a way that will improve the general welfare. Governments fail not because they lack lofty ideals but because, in the final analysis, they cannot deliver. It is the harsh test of experience, and not abstract or *a priori* reasoning, that will determine whether any particular form of government is “good”. A good government is ultimately one that works, and what works must work pragmatically. What will work in one country will not necessarily work in another — a very simple point, but one too often overlooked. It was Adam Smith, that earliest guru of economic science, who once wryly observed:

“the learned deny the evidence of their senses to preserve the coherence of the ideas of their imagination”

— an attitude that, alas, has spelled immense troubles for developing countries.

Let me therefore emphasize that Singapore does not hold itself up as a model for anyone, although we are

happy to share our experiences with anyone who may be interested, and we have systematized this through the Singapore Cooperation Programme. No one can prescribe any particular model of political development or public administration for any country. When this is attempted with only a superficial understanding of the complexities of specific situations, it leads to disaster. Our basic assumption is the fundamentally pragmatic and pluralist one that there are no models that can be applied everywhere. Of course, this does not mean that we should not study as wide a range of experiences as possible. It is only in this modest spirit that we have been so bold as to offer some comments on Singapore's experience which may be of some interest to a wider audience.

Singapore has enjoyed a stable political environment over the last three decades. Investors expect this stability to continue. They dare to make long-term plans without having to worry about reversals in government policy or, worse still, about political unrest and chaos. Indeed, foreign investors in Singapore frequently cite political stability as the single most important factor that influenced their decision to invest in Singapore. The correlation between political stability and economic growth is not unique to Singapore. There are many studies that have shown that economic growth has been significantly lower where there are frequent changes in government or political unrest.

In Singapore political stability is based on three interrelated factors which collectively define good government in our country. These are political accountability, a long-term orientation and social justice.

For long-term stability, Governments must govern with the support and consent of the governed. In Singapore, the constitution provides for parliamentary elections every five years. There is universal suffrage for all citizens over 21 years of age. Political accountability in Singapore is therefore through free, fair and clean elections, similar to those in most Western societies. But this need for periodic free and fair elections does not prescribe any specific model of political system or ideology. The clash and clamour of contending interests, street demonstrations and a rambunctious press may make for more exciting television; they may even work for some Governments and countries. But more often than not, they contradict the second pillar of good government, which is a long-term orientation.

Singapore's political culture — an administrative culture — is not based on a fundamental distrust of government, at best, a necessary evil that must always be kept in check or be made to respond to the idiosyncrasies of the electorate at every twist and turn of fortune. This model of government can be vulnerable to economic populism and makes it difficult to take a long-term orientation. In Singapore the Government acts more like a trustee. The public sector, as custodian of the people's welfare, exercises independent judgement on what is in the long-term economic interest of the people and acts on that basis.

Government policy is not dictated by opinion polls or referendums. This has sometimes meant overriding populist pressures for "easier" economic policies. Indeed, implementing the right policies has on occasion meant administering very bitter medicine to overcome economic challenges. Our experience has convinced us that the first duty of government is to govern, and to govern fairly and morally. Acting as trustee has also placed greater responsibility on the political leadership and public sector to govern in a morally upright way. At times this has required stern action to deal with sectional pressures and to take quick, transparent, fair and implacable measures against corruption.

This trusteeship model of democracy to which Singapore has subscribed has enabled us to pursue the tough policies necessary for economic development. The concept of government as trustee goes hand-in-hand with accountability. Because the Government has acted as an honest and competent trustee of the people, it has been returned to power in every general election since Singapore achieved self-government in 1959. With a comfortable majority and strong mandate, we have been able to take a long-term view in addressing our economic problems.

A long-term orientation has also been a feature of other East Asian Governments. They too have been willing to impose short-term sacrifice in order to gain long-term benefits. Ultimately, good government is not just about having free and fair elections. It is about implementing policies for the long-term public good, even if such policies are unpopular in the short term.

The third element of good government is the ability to achieve social justice. In Singapore this is done through equal treatment of all groups and by providing those who have fallen behind with opportunities to catch up. We have been fair to all ethnic, religious, economic and social groups. The Government is thus not beholden to any

special interest. This is important in any society, but all the more so in a multiracial one like Singapore, where maintaining harmony has, on occasion, again required a firm hand.

The other dimension of social justice in Singapore is the Government's effort to provide every citizen with an equal opportunity to compete and succeed. We emphasize economic efficiency and meritocracy. We have also always been conscious of the need to prevent a gradual stratification of society by class distinctions. But our efforts to level up society have always been motivated by the principle of equality of opportunity as opposed to equality of outcome. Everyone should have the opportunity to run in the race. Not everyone will finish the race at the same time. This reality is the reason why the Government has heavily subsidized its social infrastructure: education, housing and basic health care. But it has refrained from spending too much on social welfare grants, unemployment benefits and subsidies for consumption. Excessive spending on social welfare erodes the work ethic, discourages enterprise and weakens the family unit. On the other hand, spending on social infrastructure provides equal opportunities for all, thereby facilitating social mobility.

This general approach to the role of the public sector and government has guided us through the economic challenges of three decades of independence. Economic development is a race with no end. It requires constant effort and constant adaptation. There is no end to history. No society in the real world will ever find that eternally still, fixed point of perpetual and perfect equilibrium. If any society harbours illusions of having reached such a state of nirvana, it will soon decline. Adaptation of government, the public sector, and indeed of the private sector and of the individual to new challenges must be continuous. But any organization that changes only in reaction to circumstances becomes a slave to circumstances. In Singapore, we have embraced change as a necessary way of life — as an instrument for improvement and advancement. Perhaps it has been easier for us to accept this because we are a very small country with few other choices.

Change is continuous, but the philosophy of public sector economic management in Singapore has been underpinned by two broad principles that have remained relatively constant. First, the economy operates on the free market system. Market forces are allowed to prevail so that our businesses and industries are able to respond to market signals and adjust their strategies accordingly.

Scarce economic resources are allocated and used efficiently. As far as possible, the Government takes a non-interventionist approach to the economic decisions of firms, unless there are overriding social or political concerns.

Secondly, there is a high degree of outward orientation in the economy. Singapore is highly open to international trade and investment. Our trade to gross domestic product (GDP) ratio is almost 300 per cent — the highest in the world. We have allowed open competition not only among domestic firms, but also from foreign firms and products. This ensures that local companies remain globally competitive.

We believe that regional and world growth depends on the freedom of opportunity and economic linkages among economies. We therefore look outward, and we work with like-minded countries in international and regional forums such as the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) to advance the cause of free trade. Regionally, we recognize that Singapore's prosperity depends on the prosperity of our neighbours and that our prosperity in turn benefits them. Development is not a zero-sum game.

Public sector economic management in Singapore is undertaken at the macro-level mainly to identify problems or opportunities and to set broad growth directions and strategies. This macroeconomic management role is carried out by government's performing three functions.

First, the Government provides a stable environment for businesses. Prudent financial management ensures that the macroeconomic environment is stable. Fiscal policy in Singapore is guided by the principle that it should support the private sector as the engine of growth. The Singapore Government has been very conservative in its budgetary policy and has balanced its budget in nearly every year for the last 25 years. Monetary policy is geared towards keeping inflation low for long-term competitiveness and to ensure that savings are not debased. The Government also sets clear and transparent ground rules for competition.

Secondly, the Government invests in infrastructure and manpower, areas in which the private sector is likely to underinvest in the absence of government action. The Government ensures that education and training are geared towards the needs of the economy, with a strong emphasis on producing technical and professional manpower. Half of the output of our universities is in science and technical fields.

Thirdly, the Government facilitates businesses, including foreign investors wishing to come to Singapore. This function is carried out mainly by promotional agencies which are statutory boards.

I do not know what the future holds for Singapore or for other countries. The global environment in which developing countries operate will continue to be determined in large part by the major Powers — by their trade policies, their post-cold-war political priorities and their stance towards international cooperation. One thing I can predict with some confidence, however, is that the public sector and Governments will continue to be decisive factors in determining economic growth for the developing world. This is a cause for hope rather than despair. It means that, to a large extent, our destiny lies in our own hands. To grasp it, we must look at the world clinically and pragmatically — not through a distortion lens of some theory or another.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*):
I now call upon the Permanent Representative of Venezuela.

Mr. Tejera París (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Venezuelan Constitution, statutes and other laws are sold at our newspaper stands, a fact which more than one tourist has found surprising. Since 1864 each law in Venezuela has borne a title that refers only to that text, and when a law is reformed, it must be republished entirely.

The Legislature of 1864, which had just abolished the death penalty, wished to publicize laws as much as possible so that their texts were easily available to every citizen. In Venezuela there are no numbered Acts nor any calls for partial reform; rather, there is a standing invitation to citizens to inform themselves personally about their rights and duties. Many do so with good intentions, but there are always those who read them to avoid their duties — to find loopholes.

Two years ago some bankers, influenced by the fashion for "deregulation", managed to get round the banking laws in that way, thereby causing the most serious financial crisis since 1929. This grave act of corruption was both a cause of and an influence on good administrative customs in a country where over a decade there had been a surprising decline in what had seemed to be firmly based morality, and a democratization of corruption, of bribery of middle and lower officials, on a scale that we had previously only seen elsewhere.

Fortunately, in Venezuela there is a strong, loud repudiation of corruption. The people passionately support the prosecution of those who are corrupt and support new laws and more stringent treaties to facilitate the extradition or punishment of the guilty. One important factor in this was the initiative and perseverance of President Caldera in bringing about the signing of an international treaty against corruption.

These meetings of the General Assembly are intended to ensure an exchange of information and experience on public administration. We feel that the most important step taken in this connection was the adoption on 29 March 1996 in Caracas of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, which was immediately signed by 21 countries of the hemisphere.

To be able to govern, a Government must have its people's respect. No one respects a corrupt Government or a judicial system that is soft on crime; nor can anyone respect a verbose or weak Parliament. The three branches must serve their purposes; they must stand ready to progress and to reform themselves, in keeping with social needs.

I would like to ask the General Assembly today to give priority to the fight against corruption and ensure that the globalization that facilitates the speedy transfer of money and the speedy passage of individuals is supplemented by the equally speedy extradition of criminals and their loot. This is what the people want, and it would mean that justice was done.

There are countries — major countries — where domestic corruption is successfully prosecuted but the shameful practice of bribing officials in other countries is condoned. Their major companies, some of them State enterprises, including arms manufacturers, have provisions in their budgets for entertaining and bribing foreign officials. There are even tax allowances against the payments to these Judases.

On the other hand, the United States has for years had laws that severely punish those who, in order to sell their products, dare to bribe foreign officials. This example should be followed by all countries. A general treaty such as the hemispheric Convention signed in March in Caracas would be a great contribution to enhancing authority where it is weak or non-existent.

Immorality and lawlessness are not exclusive to any one country. In his speech at the multidisciplinary meeting

against corruption that the Council of Europe held recently in Strasbourg, President Caldera said:

"Corruption is one of the major threats to societies with European democratic systems."

At this international Assembly, I would say that corruption in general and administrative corruption in particular are world-wide threats, and as such require to be dealt with collectively by all countries, acting in solidarity.

The fight against corruption has become a political problem. No less political is the need to improve public administration and the functioning of the legal, legislative and executive powers. Beginning with Moses, who invented the administrative pyramid — which is certainly an endangered species — and continuing with Bagehot, Weber, Gulick, Taylor, Urwick, Galbraith, Fayol and other pioneers of administrative science, every country has added one committee after another on administrative reform and created ministries and bodies whose names reflect the passing fashions of our science.

The experts in attendance here will remember all the formulas and panaceas that have been proposed to solve administrative problems. In the 1930s, Mr. Kemmerer passed through our continent, preaching the gospel of auditors' bureaux, which were then set up in countries where they already existed under other names. After Graicunas took control, we saw the avoidance of duplication, overlapping, coordination — for one did not "order" or "direct", one "coordinated" — programming — instead of "planning" — and other prescriptions, right down to the most recent: transparency, accountability, privatization, downsizing — with its implication of massive lay-offs — and decentralization. As in pharmacology, the success of each remedy depends on who is administering it and to whom; each has its merit, but only in the right dosage.

Today, when we know that the administrative pyramid needs truncating and that reorganization must proceed through processes rather than tasks, some are still solemnly devoted to designing flow charts, shifting blocks from side to the other. There are as many varieties of these flow charts as there are styles between renaissance and abstract art, although, judging by their girth, the flow charts issued by some ministries certainly seem to be inspired by Botero.

Ms. Kamarck, on behalf of the United States, reported on the efforts to reduce and streamline bureaucracy in her country, in which there are 2 million public employees. She should be consoled by the fact that the Ministry of Education of Venezuela alone manages 500,000 teachers, represented, I believe, by 17 trade unions. This Ministry has had its successes and does not deserve to justify the superficial comment made in a United Nations report, frivolously entitled "Towards a new paradigm of State action in the social sphere", that, in Venezuela:

"The experiment of leadership in social policy from a key ministry ... illustrates the problem of coordinating activities through a single ministry."

Pity the poor Ministry of Education; but it is not alone in this regard. There are at least four other ministries, 23 governing branches and hundreds of municipalities — all decentralized — trying to improve the lot of 22 million inhabitants, 60 per cent of whom are under the age of 22.

Venezuelan public administration must also be recognized for its successes in education, health, the establishment of a huge infrastructure, and the preservation of the environment and enormous national parks. All of this was achieved through a fairly centralized administration. Today, constitutional development in Venezuela tends towards strengthening states and cities — that is, towards decentralization. It is dangerous, however, to be too passionate about decentralization when we have to solve new problems that keep cropping up, such as the very serious problem of maintaining what already exists. In physical infrastructure in particular — highways, for instance — the World Bank tells us that every penny not invested in timely maintenance will triple the cost of roadway and vehicle repair. Undoubtedly, even more harm could be done to hospitals, schools and other institutions.

I do not wish to end my statement on an anticlimactic note, but I must confess: for nearly seven years, I was a United Nations expert on public administration. In my time, I distributed flow charts, founded schools of administration and advised on planning systems. For half a century I have followed the development of technical assistance and studies on our science carried out by the Division of Public Administration. I can assure the General Assembly that the knowledge and information that have been piled up are invaluable. For two decades, meetings of experts have been held that have led to the birth of a new branch of administrative science, that of policy formulation. Now, within our Secretariat, there are several

schools of thought or think tanks — as they say, comparing thinkers with fish — endowed with brains that are certainly qualified to offer advice to Governments. I believe that this was also alluded to by my colleague Mr. Biegan, the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands, when he called for greater specialization in the Secretariat's work.

In all administration, there is an unchangeable binomial: administration is planning and implementation. He who implements without planning is like one who acts without forethought or reason. He who plans without implementing is a dreamer. The good leader cannot lose sight of his objectives, which he defines by means of formulated policies. He or she should show that what counts in government action is the "for what" and not the "why". Sadly, those administrators who fail tend to favour the latter.

The perception of clear aims is the best motivation for a public employee in his work. The examples of honesty and austerity in those who govern inspire respect and a willingness to follow orders. A sound system of selection and social protection for the employee is also very useful. But when analysing the role of public functions in development, one must find way to lend stability to honest officials while keeping it from those who, out of a sense of invulnerability and encouraged by a culture of consumerism and unscrupulous dealers, exploit the panoply of useless regulations and controls at their disposal to deliver themselves with impunity to bribery.

I hope that meetings such as this will stimulate social reform and strengthen the educational system necessary for creating the right conditions for good administration.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on Mrs. Sirpa Kekkonen, Director, Division of Public Management Reform, Finnish Institute of Public Management.

Mrs. Kekkonen (Finland): Finland shares the views expressed in the statement delivered by Mr. Motzo, Minister for Civil Services, Regional and Institutional Affairs of Italy, on behalf of the European Union, and associates itself fully with those views.

Finland attaches great importance to this resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly on public administration and development. An efficient, effective,

well-functioning and transparent public administration is a prerequisite for the development and management of public services in all countries. We welcome the comprehensive and development-oriented discussion of the role of public administration on the basis of the three broad objectives specified in the informative report of the Group of Experts: effective and participatory governance, the emergence of a global market economy and increased recognition of issues of social justice. We also appreciate the thrust of the resumed session in drawing on the experiences of individual countries. We believe that, despite the different circumstances and administrative cultures of each country, those common, basic objectives can be reached.

Strong commitment by both government and civil society is required in order to enhance sustainable development. This strong commitment is best facilitated by an open and democratic society in which human rights and the rule of law are respected. Human-centred development contains popular participation in the political process, in decision-making regarding development options and in the management of economic and human resources.

We recognize the difficulties countries encounter in their efforts to develop a committed and development-oriented public administration, particularly now when the public sectors in developing and industrialized countries alike are facing big challenges resulting from globalization and simultaneous resource constraints. In many developing countries, structural adjustment programmes call for deep reforms. Also, in industrialized countries, the public sectors are under tight scrutiny. There are apparent needs for new models of decision-making and public management. Globalization calls for alternative ways of doing things, and Governments thus have to consider what they do and how. However, a democratic society cannot be built from the top down. Civil societies should also be allowed to contribute to the strengthening of democracy and a sound administrative culture.

In recent years, Finland has undergone a period of public sector reforms in order to improve the cost-effectiveness of its public sector and to strengthen its economy within its democratic tradition. The core of the reform has been a transition to a performance-oriented public sector entrusted with a special emphasis on the accountability of decision makers and an increased use of market mechanisms in public sector management and operations. The budgetary and financial management systems, as well as personnel management, have been profoundly reformed. Many government functions have been reorganized as public enterprises or companies.

Regulatory reform and deregulation are among the important themes on the current reform agenda.

An important element in the new public management system is the decentralization of authority. On the other hand, the current trends emphasize a need to strengthen at the policy-making level the capacity for strategic thinking, long-term vision and well-coordinated action.

Reform of the public sector must, in our view, be strongly focused on the needs and rights of the citizen. From the citizen's point of view, basic values traditionally supported by the Finnish public sector, such as equity and justice, also have to be safeguarded in the future. The public administration is there for the citizens, and for them it is equally important that the public sector has a capacity to serve the economy, not vice versa.

Declining confidence in government could lead to growing tensions, and calls for a need to look at questions concerning public sector ethics, standards and codes of conduct. New models of private-public partnership may be one way towards a government that is more responsive to citizens' needs and better able to serve the economy and civil society in a turbulent and increasingly interdependent world.

A crucial issue is how the public sector acquires and maintains the ability to respond to rapidly changing situations. Accurate analyses, visions and a variety of alternatives are essential for appropriate and effective planning and for combining stability with flexibility. It is vital, for the success of public sector reforms, to involve the personnel in the process, because a paramount part of development work consists of the creation of a basis for a changed administrative culture. It should also be evident that emphasizing the capacity-building, training and skills development of public sector managers and personnel is of vital importance.

The Finnish development cooperation policy stresses the commitment of the recipient countries to, and their ownership of, the development process. We support economically, environmentally, socially and administratively sustainable national efforts, including the necessary structural reforms. We also support efforts directed towards decentralization and strengthening the local level of administration. Conformity to law, the abolishment of corruption and the political and legal accountability of decision makers are of great importance. It is essential to promote participatory approaches at all levels of society in the implementation

of development activities. The promotion of an enabling environment for private sector participation is also a major objective for Finnish development cooperation.

The role and functioning of public administration in relation to development should be considered throughout the United Nations system, including in its operative funds, programmes and specialized agencies. We see two major tasks for the United Nations in the area of public administration: first, to provide a global platform for issues concerning public administration and development, particularly the follow-up of this resumed session; and, secondly, to be an agent for improving public administration and governance in developing countries and in countries with economies in transition, with special emphasis on the least developed countries. In our view, these tasks do not require the creation of new administrative or intergovernmental structures. Support for operational activities in this sector should be primarily channelled through existing structures, in particular through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which are already present in practically all the recipient countries.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call on His Excellency Mr. Yossi Beilin, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister of Israel.

Mr. Beilin (Israel): I am honoured to be able to speak before the General Assembly, a forum of statesmen and professionals dedicated to the improvement of public administration and reform of civil service. This meeting offers me an excellent opportunity to exchange views about public service with scholars and policy makers, as well as to become more familiar with the concrete efforts undertaken by other Governments in adapting their administrative structures to the demands of changing, modernizing societies.

I do not believe that there is any need to elaborate on the point that it is incumbent upon civil services everywhere to adjust themselves to an era in which they will be expected to be more economically stringent yet more efficient and more responsive to citizens' demands. These two trends are putting political leaders, planners and public servants directly in contact with the citizen into a bind, into a situation of conflict. They must now contend with seemingly incompatible goals: those of providing better services more effectively, while living within often drastically diminished budgets. We in Israel share, I believe, the view that resolving this conflict in a just and

democratic manner is the major goal of civil service reform in the coming years.

The strategy guiding our efforts is based on progressive models of management in the public sector, but also on an awareness that structural and procedural reforms must take account of the historical, political and social contexts, as well as the economic constraints, of the civil society in which they are enacted.

Although Israel sees itself as a small, young country, it proudly counts itself among the veteran Member nations of the United Nations. Furthermore, the rapid growth of our population over the past 50 years has placed us in a position in which our public administration must confront many problems shared, apparently, by other, larger United Nations Member States.

While Israel was established as a sovereign State in 1948, the historical roots of its social institutions and government structure were laid down in the 1920s and 1930s. Many critical organizational structures, including its judicial system, were also borrowed, if not inherited, from the British mandate. It is this legacy of administrative structure and process which we are currently attempting to modernize.

The fact that we have been preoccupied with guaranteeing our survival, protecting our security, absorbing refugees and immigrants and constructing a modern State, in the fullest sense of the word, has prevented us from directing sufficient energy to the task of civil service reform and synchronizing adjustments to the fluid needs of our dynamic society. The changes taking place throughout the world, particularly in the Middle East, such as the expanding peace process and the significant improvement of our economy, are now affording us the opportunity to concentrate more of our energies and resources to those ends.

I was very pleased to observe that a number of the approaches guiding our efforts, as well as some of the principles lying at the foundation of the reforms we are currently enacting, were embraced by the delegates and experts from other nations who participated in the preparatory meetings for this important session.

I think I can safely say that privatization, decentralization and the delegation of authority, in tandem with enhanced coordination, are the cornerstones of Israel's efforts to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of its public service, particularly of the

agencies providing services directly to its citizens. In the report published by the regional conference on the role of the public administration in the promotion of economic reforms, which was held earlier this year in Berlin, I discovered a number of statements, related to the three principles I have just mentioned, which I wholeheartedly embrace. For example, it was noted that reform of the public sector is mandatory in every nation undergoing the transformation from a highly centralized economy to a market economy capable of being integrated within the global market. In such conditions, the role of the State must be redefined. Furthermore, the approach to reform should envisage the public administration as a system constantly adapting itself to the needs of the consumer and the demands of the citizen.

We in Israel, a nation characterized by a high degree of bureaucratic centralization, have encountered serious difficulties involving coordination among State agencies. The problem of departments and agencies unwilling to cooperate out of fear of attempts to undermine their authority is surely familiar to many here. In order to overcome these obstacles, we have inaugurated regular meetings of a forum of the directors general of all the Government's ministries. This mechanism has significantly facilitated cooperation and has provided support for steps aimed at problem resolution.

Another issue which I think requires comment in this context is the process of governmental decision-making. Please permit me to cite an example taken from my own personal experience as a Minister in the Israeli Government. Issues of an extremely professional nature, demanding executive decisions, are often placed before the Government. Obviously, the majority of ministers have little expertise in or experience of many of these subjects, a situation that often leaves them entirely dependent on the information or recommendations received from the minister responsible. That minister has, presumably, already investigated the available options, the best of which are laid before the Government. I thought that it would be more appropriate to present the full range of options before the ministers so that each one could consider the total spectrum before reaching a decision. After my appointment as Minister, with the support of the former Prime Minister, the late Yitzhak Rabin, I initiated the preparation of background papers regarding the major issues on the agenda prior to the Government's weekly meetings. These documents are not position papers; their purpose is to provide analyses of the relevant historical framework, as well as of the significance and potential outcomes of each

decision. I can confirm that they have proved to be effective aids in ministerial decision-making.

Moreover, we have also been conducting in-depth discussions on the subjects of planning and budgeting government operations. We have agreed to limit the total number of government ministries. An amendment passed to our basic law on government restricts the number of ministers to 18 after the coming elections in May 1996. The actual number of ministries may feasibly be even lower.

I would like to mention an example of this proposed reform, one that has already been undertaken. As of March 1996, I have been serving as Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, rather than as Minister for Economy and Planning. This change was enacted after I recommended, during my term of office, that the Ministry for Economy and Planning be disbanded. It had come to my attention that this Ministry's existence as a unique, independent body was unjustified. Its separate departments could easily and more rationally be integrated within a number of other ministries. This action was taken as part of our efforts to make the Government as compact and efficient as possible.

Although I uphold the philosophy that every government agency should determine its own policy and operational objectives, as well as autonomously control implementation of that policy and the flow of outputs, I do not believe that this implies that agencies should supply the whole range of associated services. I believe it preferable that the direct suppliers of public services — such as health, education and social welfare — should compete among themselves for their clients. By operating according to the principles of competition, we can achieve a significant reduction in public expenditures and enhance the efficiency of service provision.

Nevertheless, when introducing this conception of service delivery, we should continuously bear in mind that the client is also a citizen, an individual who pays the taxes that in essence support the very institutions whose services the Government has been mandated to supply. The continued recognition of the salience of the public nature of these services should shepherd us along the road to reform.

It appears to me that all democratic countries, including Israel and all those marching towards democratization and a free economy, share a number of characteristics. These elements furnish the impetus for

the reforms we are attempting to implement in Israel — reforms which I am convinced we must continue to support.

The first characteristic pertains to expanding needs in the face of shrinking budgets, a trend accompanied by acute public opposition to tax increases. The functional and financial capabilities of government institutions appear unable to keep pace with the rate at which needs are developing or with public expectations of expanded service and progressive improvements in the quality of life.

The second characteristic has to do with the public's dissatisfaction with the performance of government and the public administration on the national and local levels.

The third characteristic pertains to the planning and execution of projects and programmes motivated primarily by short-sighted political interests or the desire to satisfy specific segments of the population. These projects, which are not always perceived as imperative by the majority of citizens, continue to be financed despite their high costs and debatable tangible outputs.

Our fourth characteristic is the changing relationship between the individual citizen and the State, a consequence of such factors as altered attitudes, the role of the media and the increasing flow of information so characteristic of the modern age. This new relationship can be rephrased as a revised conception of one's civil rights. The individual citizen in Israel and elsewhere is more conscious than ever of his political, economic and social rights. Accordingly, democratic Governments are duty-bound to respond to the rising expectations of their citizens with respect to the exercise of those rights and the demands they entail.

In this context, I would like to mention how Israel's civil service has responded to the needs of two distinct groups in our society. I am, of course, referring to the wave of new immigrants from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia, as well as our two large national minorities, the Israeli Arabs and the Druze. The civil service has opened its ranks to new immigrants not simply to supply employment, a basic necessity for every citizen, but, most importantly, as a measure to increase the system's sensitivity to the special needs of these two populations. In regard to our Arab and Druze minorities, a targeted affirmative action programme has been successfully instituted. I am pleased to be able to report a 20 per cent increase in minority employment over the past two years — a rate exceeding the expectations of the core programme.

The bureaucratic models we are all acquainted with, those historically adopted in constructing our public administration and systems of governance, are now being replaced. The new approaches emphasize decentralization, autonomy, specialization, quality of service, participatory decision-making, management by objectives, differential compensation and accountability. They are, in fact, expanding the horizons of the traditional concept of public service.

In light of the characteristics I have mentioned and the availability of new models of public administration management, the reforms being implemented in Israel have been conceived in terms of four primary objectives. The first is a significant reduction in the size of the civil service, the resources allocated and the sectors experiencing government intervention. The second entails a redefinition of the authority and responsibilities of Government ministries as strategic staff agencies concentrating on policy formation, oversight and the systematic evaluation of operational programmes. The third consists of improvement in the implementational and regulatory capabilities of executive bodies in management development, budgeting, wage policy and the utilization of human resources. The fourth goal is the conversion of a number of administrative agencies into autonomous, instrumental profit-cost centres.

The accomplishment of these four goals is dependent on the application of three focal principles of public administration reform — decentralization, delegation of authority and personal accountability — in addition to budgeting by operation and output. The framework of the current debate does not permit me to expand on the subject, but I assume that representatives are familiar with these and other related concepts and models.

I find it encouraging that similar trends in governmental and administrative reform are in evidence in so many nations. They indicate the degree to which other Governments are conscious of the need to introduce measures for upgrading their public service capabilities. I feel I can also assume that we all appreciate how problematic it is to implement such a change and how difficult it is to coordinate the needs of all the public and private actors and interests involved. After all, we are not simply modifying structures or processes; we are revolutionizing the very concept of public service held by all the stakeholders.

In concluding my remarks, I wish to reaffirm the two principles advocated at the conclusion of the

international seminar on public administration held last month in Rio de Janeiro. I find them particularly pertinent to our discussion. These principles are, first, that Governments can realize higher efficiency by promoting private enterprise for the delivery of services formerly provided by the public sector and, secondly, that new models of public administration should stress the partnership between public administration and civil society.

If I may, however, I would like to close with a reference to the basic tenet underlying our approach to civil service reform. We in Israel do not perceive reform as a tactic for fighting the fires of public discontent over the delivery of one service or another. On the contrary, we regard reform as a strategy of periodic review of the issues on the public agenda, of planning and implementation of modifications and of evaluation of their results. Such reassessments are imperative if the civil service is to evolve in tandem with society and thereby remain a viable instrument for the execution of policy.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*):
I now call on the representative of Albania.

Mr. Kulla (Albania) (*interpretation from French*):
May I first congratulate the Secretary-General on his very detailed report, which offers Member States new perspectives on the effectiveness of public administration and the role of the Organization in this regard.

For four years now Albania has been on the path of democracy, and dynamic changes have taken place in all areas. Departing from a system in which everything belonged to the State and was controlled centrally by the State, Albania had to face the challenge of establishing a democratic system and a market economy.

The major objectives of the Albanian Administration that emerged from the democratic elections of 1992 were the following: decentralization and a new orientation of the State; the separation of powers and the establishment of their autonomy; the establishment of the rule of law; the institutionalization of private property and the protection of the right to private ownership; and the establishment and proper functioning of local government.

Four years later, we can assert that the establishment of a democratic system and economic stability are already a reality in Albania. Programmes of assistance provided by financial institutions and other international organizations have played a part in this. In a very short period of time, we have achieved the privatization of medium-sized

enterprises and of land, liberalized prices, brought inflation under control, stabilized the country's currency and created a favourable climate for foreign investment.

This economic reform has gone hand in hand with the enactment of up-to-date legislation that supports privatization, foreign investment, the new banking system and the system of customs and taxes. All this has created the institutional framework essential to the progress of economic reform in Albania.

Within this context, the establishment of a modern administration modelled after those of the developed countries continues to be a priority for the Government. Reform in the area of administration has focused on, first, serving taxpayers in the best way possible and supporting development through the organization of work at all levels of central and local administration — to this end, we are now in the process of defining politically a programme that determines the mission of various segments of public administration; second, establishing the most suitable structures for the realization of this mission — so far we have laid down the structure for ministries, and we are now continuing this work for other offices of central and local administration in order to define precisely the roles of the various levels of administration, to separate powers, to do away with parallel structures and to fill in gaps; third, after establishing these structures, enlisting qualified personnel and furthering their professional education; fourth, improving the image of the civil servant, which is closely linked to his credibility as an employee — to that end, the Albanian Parliament has just passed a law on service in public administration; fifth, controlling the number of employees in administration, as well as their salaries, through an integrated salary scale; and sixth, separating the roles of political, administrative and executive posts in order to contribute to the effectiveness of the administration's performance.

Currently in Albania, various United Nations organs, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the European Union are undertaking assistance programmes for the encouragement of the private sector, construction of the infrastructure, protection of the environment and reform of the banking system. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those institutions for the technical and financial assistance they have afforded to Albania through those programmes.

In order to follow closely the reform of public administration structures, we have created the Department of Public Administration, linked to the Council of Ministers, as well as an intersectoral working group. After two years of work, that Department has achieved, *inter alia*, the drafting of a manual of government, the establishment of an information centre for public administration under the auspices of the Council of Ministers, and the creation of a draft civil service code and a draft code of ethics. It is also working to establish a system for the training, recruitment and promotion of public administration employees.

We have given particular attention to strengthening local government by organizing courses for professionals so that reform will be carried out at the levels of central and local administration at the same rate.

We attach particular importance to the recommendations found in the Secretary-General's report on the creation of special advisory bodies, programmes for developing infrastructure, the consideration of environmental protection standards, the establishment of a professional taxation administration, the adoption of a complete legal framework for administration and for strengthening the role of the courts in resolving administrative conflicts, and the ratification of the conventions of the International Labour Organization on employment and social development.

Albania needs the technical and financial assistance of the United Nations and other international agencies so that it can implement these recommendations, as well as the plans of action adopted at all the United Nations international conferences.

We consider that the recommendations on the restructuring of the United Nations programme in public administration, on the establishment of an emergency fund, on the establishment of an international fund to integrate environmental issues into infrastructure development programmes and on the placement of the Group of Experts under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council will strengthen the role of the Organization in the field of public administration.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Takht-Ravanchi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to begin by congratulating the Secretary-General

and the Group of Experts on the preparation of the reports before us.

The resumed session of the General Assembly on public administration and development provides us with a forum where Member States can address this important issue through an exchange of views and experiences in this field, as outlined by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/136. I would like to enumerate some of the most critical principles which, from our point of view, are integral to a successful debate on this subject.

In his report the Secretary-General recognizes that the role, status and operation of public administration are tied to the unique social, economic and political complexion of each country, and he further indicates that the primary responsibility for any endeavour in this connection rests with national Governments. We fully support the view expressed by the Secretary-General.

It should be noted that this conviction derives inherently from the spirit and the letter of the Charter of the United Nations.

Moreover, because government structures and public management systems vary greatly among countries on the basis of their particular values and historical, cultural and philosophical backgrounds, a comprehensive approach to this matter must incorporate full consideration of these very basic components of development management.

In the light of these principles, as well as of the realities of development priorities and political, economic, social and cultural circumstances, which vary widely from country to country, it would be quite difficult, if not impossible, to identify and suggest a model for a more effective and efficient public administration of development issues that would be uniformly applicable.

While the development and promotion of effective and efficient public management, responsive to the needs of various populations, is an issue of interest to all countries around the globe, it seems that some of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report do not embrace the aforementioned principles and, further, assume that there can be found a perfect and evolved sample of good governance that might be replicable by others.

It is true that to some extent, and in some areas, all countries in the developed and developing world alike

suffer from the same maladies, which may, at times, paralyse the administrative machinery and create some impediments to progress. However, these impediments are no match for the unfavourable international development environment and the lack of access to adequate financial resources and technology, which remain among the most critical obstacles to the sustained economic growth and sustainable development of developing countries, and also as prerequisites for a more effective and efficient public administration.

As far as the issues of institutional arrangements and follow-up are concerned, we believe that the existing machinery and mechanism within the United Nations system should continue to operate as in the past and continue to serve as a forum for facilitating the exchange of information and experiences, as well as for providing assistance to individual countries at their request.

May I now make some remarks on the experiences, achievements and challenges faced by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran *vis-à-vis* public administration and development over the past few years. Seventeen years ago, the Islamic Republic of Iran inherited from the previous regime, among other conditions, an economy highly dependent on oil export revenues; widespread poverty and illiteracy, particularly in rural areas; insufficient basic services and infrastructures; and an inefficient Government apparatus.

This situation was aggravated, at the beginning of the 1980s, by the imposition of a devastating eight-year war, which necessitated the mobilization of a considerable share of available resources. In addition, the country faced many natural and man-made disasters, including widespread flooding, a horrific earthquake, damages caused by rising sea-water levels, the immigration of millions of people from war-affected areas in neighbouring countries and coercive economic measures directed against our country.

Nevertheless, even under such circumstances, the efforts undertaken throughout the Islamic Republic of Iran to establish a new system based on democracy, freedom, independence and social justice, in accordance with national values, were tremendous, and the first five-year social, economic and cultural development plan was designed and initiated towards the end of the 1980s.

In spite of the adversities of the time at both the domestic and international levels, with the support of the Iranian people an encouraging average annual growth rate

of 7.3 per cent during the period of the plan's implementation was achieved.

Economic structural adjustment, privatization, debt servicing measures, a balanced budget, more effective control over monetary aggregates, the introduction of new and innovative financial instruments, the simplification of regulations governing trade and production, the adoption of major steps towards the establishment of a market economy, the undertaking of studies on the better use of public administration services and on the strengthening of the National Organization of Administration Affairs, and the activation of measures to attract foreign investment and expand economic, social and environmental relations and cooperation, *inter alia*, at the regional and subregional levels, are but some of the policies executed under the first plan.

Based on valuable experiences gained and lessons learned from these endeavours, the second five-year development plan was initiated on 21 March 1995, the beginning of the Iranian year.

Examples of Iran's economic and social development achievements in recent years as an indication of the capabilities and capacities of public administration in my country in connection with development include, among others, the following.

First, non-oil exports, which constituted only 5 per cent of the country's foreign trade before the 1979 revolution, reached \$5 billion in 1995, representing about 30 per cent of our foreign trade. Second, the direction has shifted towards exporting processed items and goods with higher value added, ranging from canned foods to petrochemicals. Third, the surplus trade balance reached \$5 billion in 1995. Fourth, the budget deficit decreased from 50.1 per cent in 1988-1989 to only 1.8 per cent in 1992-1993, and will be zero for the period 1996-1997; at the same time, real gross domestic product growth has averaged about 7 per cent during the last few years.

Fifth, the development budget's share of the total increased from 19.4 per cent in 1988-1989 to 38 per cent, and it is foreseen that the ambitious goal of 48 per cent will be reached in 1996-1997, a step unprecedented throughout the history of Iran's economy. Sixth, major headway in infrastructure development has been achieved, so that potable water, roads, schools, telephone service, clinics and other basic services have been brought to tens of thousands of cities, towns and villages, including the remotest areas of the country. By the end

of the period of the second development plan — 1995-1999 — some 98.9 per cent of the urban population will be supplied with sanitary piped water.

Seventh, in the energy sector, in addition to the application of economic instruments, major projects have been implemented in order to expand the use of natural gas, which exists abundantly in the country, to provide a lower-pollutant source of energy for urban and rural needs, and thus preserve the environment. It is expected that by the end of the period of the second development plan, the population throughout the country will have access to this service. Investments have also been made towards the use of thermal and nuclear energy, for peaceful purposes, to encourage further the use of clean and renewable sources of energy.

Eighth, efforts are being continued to attain self-sufficiency in the production of medicine and medical equipment. Ninth, while there was a time not so long ago when Iran was dependent on industrialized countries for even the simplest technical problems, today giant projects such as the building of dams, power plants, oil refineries, petrochemical complexes and subways are designed and implemented by Iranians. For instance, in the coming days, the momentous project of the Mashhad-Sarakhs Railway will link East Asia and the Central Asian Republics to the major seaports in the Persian Gulf in the south and Europe in the west. This project is completely Iranian-driven.

Tenth, the technical and scientific capabilities and infrastructural development capacities of the country have reached a stage at which the Iranian public and private sectors have entered into technical assistance programmes for the implementation of projects abroad. Eleventh, food production increased from less than 50 per cent of demand in 1979 to 86 per cent in 1995. This occurred during the same period in which the population approximately doubled.

Twelfth, urgent measures continue to be taken to eradicate poverty, particularly through a series of flexible policies, national resource management, full utilization of production capacities and generation of employment. Thirteenth, the insurance industry has had a growth rate of 62 per cent. Fourteenth, the population growth rate decreased from 3.6 to 1.7 per cent. Fifteenth, literacy among the general population increased from 47.5 per cent in 1979 to 82.6 per cent in 1994. During the same period, literacy among women, which was only 35.5 per cent in 1977, reached 78.1 per cent in 1994, and rural area literacy jumped from 30.5 per cent to 75.1 per cent.

Finally, I should like to emphasize that adherence to Islamic values considerably facilitated the tasks of public administration in achieving the targets set forth and the objectives envisaged by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Our experiences and successes indicate, once again, how effective and efficient the public sector can be if it is adapted to and motivated by the beliefs and background of the society it serves.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*):
I call on the representative of Kazakhstan.

Mrs. Arystanbekova (Kazakhstan) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Republic of Kazakhstan recognizes the urgent need to enhance the effectiveness of public administration in order to create favourable conditions for the sustainable development of States, and the steps that have been taken in this regard by the international community, as reflected in the Tangier Declaration, General Assembly resolution 49/136 and other United Nations documents.

The delegation of Kazakhstan expresses its appreciation to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali for his report (A/50/847) on public administration and development and his extremely thought-provoking introductory statement, which set a very active tone for the discussion.

I also wish to note the usefulness and timeliness of the report (A/50/525) of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance which contains extremely thorough analytical material and interesting recommendations.

Kazakhstan welcomes United Nations efforts to enhance transparency in measures taken in the field of public administration and development and supports the idea of the coordinating role to be played by the United Nations in providing information and services on the basis of the collection and dissemination of such information, taking into account the experience amassed by the Organization in the field of public administration and development. We also fully share the view that improving administrative systems, providing consultative services, training personnel and other activities require the priority attention of the United Nations and donor States.

The aims and tasks facing the world community in enhancing the role of Governments and State organs in the process of ensuring steady economic growth and

sustainable development in all countries are to a large extent reflected in my own country's need to strengthen the potential of public administration and finances.

As it emerges as a sovereign State, the Republic of Kazakhstan has been gradually mastering the difficult and contradictory path of transforming its economic relations. In consistently implementing an ongoing liberalization of the economy, we have completely dismantled the earlier central planning system and are building a market infrastructure that ensures the free movement of goods and capital. A process of reform is unfolding in State ownership, giving more room to private enterprise.

For Governments, as for people, the first five years of life are a time of active learning and involvement with the world. And for our country, it has been a time for assuming statehood, forging economic ties, creating the institutions of civil society and carrying out profound socio-economic and political reform.

In the Secretary-General's report and in the draft resolution submitted by the delegation of Morocco, the system of public administration embraces broader aspects, including electoral, judicial and legal reforms and the strengthening of civil society. In this respect, it should be emphasized that the new Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan enshrines the legal foundations of public administration on the basis of a very clear distinction between the three branches of power: the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. One example of the implementation of these provisions in the Constitution of the Republic was the election of a bicameral legislature, the enactment of judicial and legal reforms and the development and strengthening of the democratic foundations of society.

In accordance with the recently adopted State programme of action extending reforms to the period 1996-1998, together with the most important tasks of strengthening the macroeconomic stabilization that has already been achieved in my country, we plan to pursue structural-institutional reform, to intensify State support for free enterprise, to strengthen the institutions of State power, legality and law and order, as well as monetary and financial discipline. We attach great importance to improving the machinery of State regulation of the economy and to decentralizing the management and implementation of reforms, extending and strengthening the functions of the local organs of executive power.

In the light of our movement into a new stage of transformation — the achievement of constitutional reform — the Government is now undertaking the improvement of administration and taking its information services to a new level. There is a need to bring the main elements of economic administration and agricultural reform to the regional level and to reorganize the civil service.

The Government of the Republic has now begun to pursue a policy that effectively combines centralization and decentralization of the administration in the implementation of reforms and gradually transfers most of the current functions and powers from the Government, ministries and State offices to the regional level, while the decentralization of responsibilities is being reinforced by the appropriate transfer of rights.

The regional policies of the Government are aimed at creating conditions for the effective exploitation of regional factors for economic growth in the regions themselves and the country as a whole, for strengthening the unity and independence of the Republic, for enhancing the people's standard of living and for improving environmental conditions.

The reforms being enacted in the country in the field of public administration respond to the fundamentally new demands being made on civil servants. These involve, above all, improving the professionalism of government employees and making them competent in the most progressive methods of management. It was precisely with this aim that the 1996 law on the Republic's civil service was adopted.

In his letter to the Secretary-General on the results of the World Summit for Social Development, the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbaev, pointed out that:

"The results of the high-level meeting in Copenhagen have set the groundwork for the social policy of our State for the next few years and beyond".

The Government of Kazakhstan gives particular priority to enhancing the effectiveness of the system of social protection for the population by giving it greater focus and clearly defining the duties and financial responsibilities of State administrative bodies at various levels. The Republic is implementing a project on social protection that has been approved by the World Bank and

is designed to rationalize the provision of basic social services to the population.

The Republic of Kazakhstan is exploring various ways and means of cooperating with the United Nations and other international organizations in the field of public administration. We are pleased to note that, through international seminars, meetings and conferences convened by the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, a broad exchange of experience and information is taking place among States on a number of current administrative questions, including the adaption of State institutions to the requirements of democratic reform, the promotion of economic reform, training personnel and so on.

One example of useful cooperation was the convening in May 1995, in Kazakhstan, of an international seminar on the subject of investment and conditions for moving into a market economy. The seminar was organized by the United Nations Department for Development Support and Management Services in cooperation with the Government of Kazakhstan.

The seminar brought together representatives of States with varied experience in implementing investment policies. The very thorough discussion that took place afforded, in the opinion of the participants, an opportunity to become familiar with national approaches to questions of investment under conditions of transition to a market economy.

Kazakhstan will continue to broaden its cooperation with the United Nations and welcomes the efforts being made by the Organization to improve the public administration systems and strengthen the human resources potentials of countries with economies in transition.

The recommendations and decisions that emerge from the current resumed session will undoubtedly give a new impetus to concerting the efforts and pooling the knowledge of the international community in order to improve institutions of public administration, creating conditions for sustainable development and improving the well-being of peoples.

The Republic of Kazakhstan intends to continue to cooperate constructively with the States Members of the United Nations in achieving our common goals.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on Mr. Ognyan Panov, Head of the Department

for Administrative Reform, Council of Ministers of Bulgaria.

Mr. Panov (Bulgaria): My delegation welcomes the convening of the resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly for the purpose of holding a comprehensive discussion on the issue of public administration. We appreciate the Secretary-General's introduction of his report (A/50/847) on public administration and development. We have taken note of the report (A/50/525) of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance, which we found very interesting.

Having heard the previous speakers, it can safely be said that administrative reforms are in the making in many countries, particularly in all countries in transition. For the latter, such reforms have turned out to be more than an introduction of modern trends into public services. They are, rather, a process of critical importance for any new democratic society faced with the challenges of making the transition from a centrally planned to a market economy.

Years of experience have taught us that a new, professional, citizen-oriented State administration, loyal to the Government, is needed. In this regard, several prerequisites could be spelt out. In our view, an administration should, *inter alia*, be responsive to the needs of society and of citizens, provide for social goals and market economy regulations, support private initiative and the promotion of the private sector and achieve cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

The Bulgarian Government recently submitted an official application for full membership in the European Union. We have started a complex dialogue for admission that will certainly impose higher standards on our administration. To that end, in March 1996 the Government committee for European integration adopted a strategy for administrative reform entitled "The new administration". The name speaks for itself.

As highlighted in our blueprint for administrative reform, we consider that making changes in our administration will require time and constant adjustment to the new realities and to the needs of Bulgarian citizens. In this regard, the following priority objectives, which we hope to achieve in the near future, have been put forward: first, a performance-based evaluation of the functions, structures and size of the State administration; secondly, decentralization and the enhancement of the

role of the local administration, coupled with up-to-date training; thirdly, the use of information technologies for performance evaluation and service orientation; and fourthly, the introduction of new incentives for quality services and professional skills.

My delegation would like to indicate its willingness to share with other countries its experience in the field of administrative reform. We are confident that the United Nations initiative to hold a session of the General Assembly on public administration and development has provided us with a good opportunity and will prove quite useful.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express its positions regarding the follow-up to this resumed session.

First, we share the view that at the international level, the main responsibility of the United Nations system in dealing with public administration and development should rest with the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies.

Secondly, the activities of the United Nations in the area of public administration and finance should be optimized, taking into account the areas of priority identified at the twelfth meeting of Experts. In this context, the United Nations Development Programme, which is already actively engaged in many of these areas, should play a major role.

Thirdly, a specific mandate in the area of public administration should be envisaged for the Economic Commission for Europe as well.

And fourthly, greater complementarity should be promoted between multilateral and bilateral cooperation programmes.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Kamal Nasser, Minister for Public Administration and Development of Jordan.

Mr. Nasser (Jordan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I have the honour today to represent my country, Jordan, at the resumed fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly on public administration and development to discuss a very important subject: the role that public administration should play to effectively enhance development requirements in different fields.

I should like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to all those who took part

in the preparations for this meeting, which is aimed at finding the most beneficial methods by which a qualitative move can be made to enhance the abilities of public agencies in different countries and to strengthen the capabilities of the United Nations to activate those abilities, in order to establish a solid basis for development in various domains.

Public administration in Jordan is composed of all ministries, public corporations and departments that either supervise or participate in developmental activities at all levels, whether political, social, cultural or economic, in full cooperation with the private sector and with Arab and foreign agencies, organizations and States.

For decades, Jordan has been fortunate to have outstanding leadership at the head of its public administration, imbued with a clear vision and a creative ability to envisage the future and specify the steps needed to lay down the practical framework of development. That leadership has been able, at this stage, to put the final touches on peace-building, with the hope that our region will become a peaceful area that can easily attract investments and investors to speed up the pace of development.

Jordan's external and internal policies, based on full respect for the Charter and the resolutions of the United Nations, are very sound and stable.

We are thus honoured to represent Jordan in supporting the United Nations recommendations in the field of development. We also value the exchange of views and experiences in this field with representatives from other countries, and we wish to associate ourselves with the Group of Experts, which was able to properly design the general framework, laying the strong foundations on which development is to be established, drawing the support of the United Nations to the Jordanian projects that have emanated from the era of peace.

After studying the report (A/50/525) of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance on its twelfth meeting and taking its recommendations into consideration, the Jordanian Government would like to express its full support for the conclusions and recommendations of the report and wishes to present its own priorities in public administration and development.

In the field of government capacity for policy development and formulation, restructuring administrative

systems, reforming civil service and developing human resources and training in the field of public administration, a consolidated administrative development plan was approved in Jordan by the Prime Minister for civil servants at all levels. This plan is now being implemented by the Institute of Public Administration.

The concept of putting citizens first was viewed as a primary necessity, so that by simplifying procedures and delegating authority citizens' transactions could be accomplished in a fast, simple and feasible manner.

The Government of Jordan is also in the process of developing civil service regulations to ensure legality, objectivity and fairness in recruitment matters.

Furthermore, Jordan has adopted a national information project for public administration that seeks to create a useful network for the exchange of information in the development field.

A number of public agencies were restructured to enable them to concentrate on planning, control and follow-up functions rather than interfering in direct production and implementation activities.

This administrative plan laid out by the Government of Jordan is ambitious and needs all kinds of support from the United Nations, especially from the General Assembly. The existence of democracy and peace in Jordan underlines the importance of this plan. The political will of the Jordanian Government was very apparent in crystallizing the concepts contained in the plan.

In the field of environmental protection, a national information strategy was formulated in Jordan and a new public corporation to protect the environment was established. What is needed now is support for this strategy, endorsement of the steps taken by this corporation and assistance in the design and implementation of projects relating to environment and natural resources in Jordan.

In the field of social development, the emphasis was placed on family and childhood concerns, poverty eradication, fighting unemployment, family reproductive projects, special education, employment of the disabled and the development of local community centres.

We request the United Nations to support the efforts to unify the components of the social assistance network, social protection, the national strategy for population — adopted recently by the Jordanian Prime Minister's

office — and the strategy for social development. We also request it to follow up the drafting of child-related laws and to help raise the standard of public administration in the social fields to ensure that human services are rendered equitably to those who deserve them.

As regards the structuring of private and public sector interrelationships, public policy in Jordan stresses the need for innovation in the private sector economy, encourages the privatization of public agencies and lays the appropriate groundwork to attract investments. An independent corporation for the promotion of investment was established, and we hope that it will be supported.

In the field of financial and fiscal management, the Government concentrated on enhancing the managerial and technical capabilities of civil servants to follow up the implementation of the economic rehabilitation and rectification program of 1996-1998, in order to achieve an increase in the gross national product. We request that the United Nations provide needed support for Jordan in reducing its debt burden to enable it to maintain its fiscal stability and contain the pressures of inflation.

In the field of infrastructure programmes, Jordan's priorities are concentrated on ensuring a high level of awareness of the importance of maintenance, especially technical maintenance, in the continuation of the developmental process. It also stresses the importance of investment in basic elements of infrastructure, such as water, electrical resources, telecommunications services, a national roads network, meteorology, the establishment of railroads throughout the Kingdom and the expansion of the port of Aqaba.

In the field of development projects, we request the United Nations to assist Jordan in establishing a highly qualified group of experts, with interdisciplinary perspectives, to be responsible for the accurate analysis of public policies in order to ensure that development budgets do not bear the burden of political projects. This group would also be responsible for conducting negotiations regarding projects financed through loans, grants and assistantships to guarantee that agreements on those projects are not contradictory.

Jordan recommends and supports the idea of converting the Group of Experts into a United Nations body similar to the Statistical Commission and the Population Commission. Jordan suggests that the new body be named the "public administration and

development committee" and that it serve as the only mechanism playing an important role in public administration and development. It would also be expected to work as a technical committee and a liaison between the United Nations and individual countries, to ensure the best possible cooperation and follow-up for all public administration projects adopted by the United Nations.

Jordan supports the idea of convening an international conference to finance development and further supports the idea of providing mechanisms that would guarantee the success of such a conference. Developing countries would especially benefit greatly from such a conference, which should be convened in a developing country and be financed by the United Nations. Jordan stands ready to host such a conference if the financing for it can be secured.

The Government of Jordan is in the process of producing a national strategy to combat corruption and counter-productive bureaucracy. This strategy is based on public awareness programmes, the modification of outdated regulations and the introduction of new and just regulation frameworks to ensure the prevention of all forms of corruption. This proposed strategy, based largely on civil service ethics, will concentrate on administrative training and culture and stress the efficient control of management functions.

Once again, I wish the General Assembly all success in its resumed fiftieth session, and I hope that it will have support in the various fields of development in every way required and in every way possible.

For the sake of brevity, in my statement I have summarized the working paper that covers the development projects in Jordan requiring support and that will be circulated to representatives. A translation of the administrative development plan, which outlines the interrelationships between all forms of administration and development, is also included.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Sweden.

Mr. Osvald (Sweden): Sweden shares fully the views expressed earlier by Italy on behalf of the European Union. The importance Sweden attaches to the issue of public administration, democratization and good governance in promoting social development has been manifested over the years. One recent example which comes to mind is of course the United Nations Conference and Workshop on Public Administration and Social Development, held in

Stockholm last October as part of the preparations leading up to this resumed session. The Swedish Government hosted the Conference, and the report from Stockholm has been distributed as an official document of the General Assembly at this session.

Sweden is in the process of reviewing its foreign and development cooperation policy, making it an instrument in a comprehensive Swedish foreign policy with three aims: peace, democracy and development.

These objectives are clearly interrelated. In most parts of the world the threat today is not a foreign army but, rather, poverty, environmental degradation and social and political tension nourished by misery and humiliation. Security is no longer primarily a military matter. The achievement of lasting and sustainable peace requires confidence-building, justice and equal opportunities.

We have learned that a democratic culture provides greater potential for conflict prevention and resolution. Continued democratization within countries must be encouraged, underpinning a democratic international community.

Sweden is honoured to host the recently established International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), which supports democratization processes throughout the world. Fourteen countries and several international organizations have come together to complement the work of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations and to work for the long-term strengthening of democracy. I believe that many of the issues before this resumed session on public administration and development are directly relevant to the focus of IDEA — for example, local democracy.

Over the last few years a number of global United Nations conferences have reflected the major challenges facing the international community. Last spring in Copenhagen, at the social Summit, countries agreed on that.

"Democracy and transparent and accountable governance and administration ... are indispensable foundations for the realization of social and people-centred sustainable development." (*A/CONF.166/9, chap. I, annex I, para. 4*)

The participating Governments committed themselves to reinforcing the means and capacities for

people to participate in the formulation and implementation of social and economic policies and programmes through decentralization, open management of public institutions and strengthening the abilities and opportunities of civil society and local communities to develop their own organizations, resources and activities.

It goes without saying that one key factor in the follow-up and implementation of these different commitments and objectives is the existence of professional public management at all levels of society.

It is sad that this needs to be said. After a decade of simplistic messages about how much the market can do, it is time to recall the central and crucial role of public responsibility. That is what makes the difference between a social market economy and an unregulated market economy.

How, then, can we promote the establishment and improvement, or both, of the capability of our respective societies when it comes to good governance and efficient public management?

Sound policies are necessary, but without the capacity to operationalize and distribute political reforms, citizens may lose confidence in the political process. The development of a civil society and a democratic market economy requires the development of appropriate and legitimate public institutions.

These include, for example, a working parliament, efficient local government, a strong ministry of finance, effective taxation and customs organizations, a well-organized central bank, a reliable statistical office, a system for selecting and training the civil service and so on.

But the question is also how we can design a structure which is not only an instrument for a State, region or community, but also, in itself, a guiding spirit for democracy and transparency.

Local communities, non-governmental organizations, minority groups, labour unions and people, which public administration systems should serve, must be active participants when promoting respect for democracy and the rule of law.

This session of the General Assembly provides a valuable opportunity for the international community to exchange views on a crucial subject for sustainable

development. We are attracted by the idea of designating specific sessions of the General Assembly to various themes of importance. This working method could perhaps be used more frequently when addressing global issues in the future.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Nepal.

Mr. Shah (Nepal): My delegation welcomes the opportunity provided by the resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly to examine the question of public administration and development, particularly in developing countries and those with economies in transition.

The decade of the nineties has brought a multitude of challenges and opportunities, and to prepare themselves for the advent of the twenty-first century all nations, large and small, developed and developing, are being forced to rethink the issues of public administration and development. Our Organization itself is currently undergoing a process of reform with the objective, in a nutshell, of doing more with less — with enhanced accountability, transparency, efficiency and representativeness, without, hopefully, losing sight of its basic Charter principles and commitment to humanity.

My delegation recognizes the reality of the uniqueness of each country's system in public administration and development. As a functioning democracy with an irrevocable commitment to basic human rights, my country believes that it is equally important that in the emerging international environment we recognize the existence of a generally applicable set of principles of public administration and its role in development. Greater productivity, accountability, transparency and responsiveness must be the hallmark of any public administrative system.

While underlining the universal character of good governance, I hardly need emphasize the importance of public administration in development. The role of public administration is indispensable in effecting a smooth transfer from centralized planning and implementation to decentralization, from a centrally planned economy to a market economy, from State-run enterprises to privatization. Notwithstanding the increasing and effective role of the private sector as a vehicle for rapid and sustainable economic growth and development, and the existence of complementarity of roles between the public and private sectors and non-governmental organizations

in accelerating the pace of socio-economic development, it is the government which plays a central role in developing basic infrastructure, combating socio-economic disparities, defining priority areas of development and carrying out such essential functions as, for example, maintaining peace and order, safeguarding democracy and the fundamental rights of citizens and preserving the environment. Even with regard to the effective functioning of the private sector and the non-governmental organizations, it is public administration which must create the necessary conditions.

My delegation is highly impressed with Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali's assertion in his opening statement that democratization is the single most important factor for improved public administration. Democratization and good governance, in our view, are synonymous. Without participatory decision-making, effective, responsive, transparent and responsible public administration is simply not possible. Democracy is the only system of governance which provides a common and uniform incentive to public servants for maximum efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of goods and services for development. Only democracy places people at the centre of all development endeavours. In every democratic society, public administration should have a basic obligation to apprise citizens of any important measures being planned so that they can involve themselves in participatory decision-making. In this connection, I should like to add that the Constitution of Nepal guarantees the justifiable fundamental right of all citizens to seek and obtain, except as otherwise stipulated in specific laws, information about any matter of public importance.

The draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.69, introduced by the Minister of Morocco, would have the General Assembly recommend that appropriate machinery be established to ensure maximum coordination of activities between the United Nations programme in public administration, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Bretton Woods institutions. It also recommends that the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance be designated the United Nations Committee on Public Administration and Development. Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would recognize the need to further define the role of the United Nations as a global centre of excellence in the field of public administration and development and to optimize this role to make it more responsive to emerging public management issues relating to sustainable development. The Assembly would also recognize the need for Member States to strengthen their capacities for effective public administration, to promote

economic growth and sustainable development and to establish conditions for good governance in which the private sector and the non-governmental organizations can play an increasingly meaningful role.

It is with great pleasure that my delegation announces its support for the draft resolution.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call on Professor Antonios Makrydimitris, Professor of Public Administration, University of Athens, Greece.

Mr. Makrydimitris (Greece): The delegation of Greece would like to add its voice to those of its partners in the European Union and other Member States in warmly congratulating the Secretary-General on his report, and the Government of Morocco on this initiative.

It is indeed a historic moment when the General Assembly of the United Nations meets for the first time to discuss specifically the question of public administration and its role in development and modernization.

The report of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance is a valuable document which marks this historic moment of global thinking and deliberation on the problems related to administrative modernization and reform.

This resumed session could not be more timely. It comes against the backdrop of 10 to 15 years of sad neglect. Government and administration, once viewed as the steam engine and the indispensable machinery for modernization and reform, were, however, during this period, downplayed and criticized as oversized, costly, unproductive, bureaucratic and ineffective; in short, government and administration were considered an obstacle rather than an instrument for modernization and reform.

As a result, measures of reform were initiated in various countries all over the world aimed at limiting the waste and reducing the cost of public services and at raising the quality of administrative performance.

The spirit of reform has helped introduce a new emphasis on cost-consciousness, efficiency, effectiveness and lean and flexible management structures and procedures. It has also given rise to a new paradigm of market-oriented and citizen-responsive public services run according to the rules and axioms of public management

orthodoxy — a paradigm that claims to differ substantially from old-fashioned bureaucracies of the past.

Carried too far, however, and dogmatically pursued with narrow, short-term objectives, this kind of management-inspired administrative reform might prove destabilizing and could undermine the critical capacity of Governments to manage complex problems of the real world, to plan for the future and to preserve the conditions of peaceful social association which are essential for civilized coexistence in and between societies.

As a matter of fact, the world today is full of telling examples of success and stories of failure, of well- and ill-conceived, properly steered and poorly executed plans and strategies of reform and change in State bureaucracies and administrations.

In other words, there is a wealth of data and experience from which to learn and draw conclusions.

Indeed, there is no better time or place than this resumed session of the General Assembly to elaborate on the necessary lessons that come out of this world-wide experience.

The twentieth century has, according to major historians, already ended, since its basic features have been conclusively shaped. We stand now at the threshold of a new century, a new millennium and a new era. This is an era of rapid change and transformation which is technologically driven on a global scale and in global dimensions. It is hardly surprising that this era of change presents new challenges, risks and opportunities which affect the human race as a whole.

The condition of the world's environment, rapid demographic growth and the massive displacement of populations, with the attendant problems of human rights, are only obvious examples.

Whether we tackle and resolve those problems satisfactorily or not will depend to a large extent on the solutions we adopt and apply. This in turn depends on the management and policy-making capacities of the administrative structures of the Member States.

This places a heavy burden on Governments and on the plans and strategies for reform which they adopt. During this week we have had the opportunity to inform ourselves about them and take a bird's eye view of the common problems and the various strategies adopted to

deal with them. There is no doubt that this information represents a most valuable asset in the hands of reformers and modernizers all over the world.

In that respect, the role of the United Nations is also crucial in providing a standing information centre and focal point for the exchange of data, experience, advice and models of reform. The experience must be shared on a global scale because the problems we are facing are global in their nature and implications.

Enhancing the role of the United Nations as, in the words of the report of the Group of Experts,

"a global depository for exchange of information and as a central research clearing-house for public administration and development" (A/50/525, para. 159)

would perhaps require another look at the institutional machinery of the United Nations.

In particular, it seems appropriate that, first, the issue of public administration reform and development should be included as a regular item and be reviewed and considered on a regular basis every two years or so in the agendas of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. It should be noted that this is acknowledged by the Secretary-General in his report.

Secondly, an interim and follow-up mechanism, such as the Committee on Public Administration and Development, should be set up. The Committee, working in close collaboration with the consultative group, would meet annually and prepare the ground for the sessions of the General Assembly. Moreover, the Committee could gradually evolve into an international watchdog on public administration and development and prove instrumental in drafting an international code of ethics and standards of conduct for public officials. This code could then be brought before the General Assembly to be discussed and presented to Member States for endorsement and application.

Thirdly, regional and subregional initiatives should be welcomed with the aim of establishing periodic opportunities for sharing experiences and exchanging views and information with regard to particular issues and concerns relating to administrative modernization and development.

The significance of this kind of regional or subregional cooperation in public administration and reform can hardly be disputed, because of its role not only in enhancing investment, economic development and modernization, but also in improving the conditions of peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding.

It has been said that the only thing that history teaches us is that it never teaches us anything. Yet, to take a more optimistic view, we should not miss this historic opportunity to make some progress and launch a new era of international cooperation in the field of public administration and development.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): In accordance with resolution 31/3 of 18 October 1976, I now call on Mr. Mohan Kaul, Director of the Management and Training Services Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Mr. Kaul (Commonwealth Secretariat): I bring with me the greetings of the Commonwealth Secretary General, His Excellency Chief Emeka Anyaoku, and would like to thank you, Mr. Acting President, on his behalf for the opportunity given to the Commonwealth to participate in the resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly on public administration and development.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has had the privilege of participating in various activities in preparation for this session. The Secretariat was represented in the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance, and it also collaborated with the United Nations in organizing the regional meetings in Africa and Asia.

The Harare Commonwealth Declaration of 1991 identified just and honest government as key components of Commonwealth values. Commonwealth assistance to member States in the promotion of good governance and accountable administration has, accordingly, since been included as one of the priority programme areas in the Secretariat's work plan, in recognition of the fact that an efficient public service is a necessary part of the underpinning of just and honest government.

Commonwealth cooperation in relation to public administration is facilitated immeasurably by the many common features that exist among all Commonwealth countries in respect of institutions, systems, traditions and values within the public service. This has resulted in a considerable sharing of both problems and achievements among public servants and political leaders throughout the

Commonwealth. One of the outcomes of such cooperation has been the Secretariat's work on the preparation of a portfolio and profiles of good practices in public service management in Commonwealth countries.

Many Commonwealth countries have adopted similar strategies for reform, emphasizing, for example, a redefinition of the relationship between policy-making and administration; greater accountability, task definition, performance measurement and devolution of the control of resources; the need for closer collaboration with the private sector; the acceptance of continuing organizational change; and the importance of the notion of service quality.

To further strengthen Commonwealth cooperation and assistance in this area, Commonwealth Heads of Government endorsed, at their meeting in Auckland in November 1995, the Commonwealth Secretary General's initiative on public service reforms, entitled "Towards a new public administration". The initiative aims to provide an enhanced and integrated programme of assistance to member countries, incorporating advice, training and policy analysis, and focuses on the design of overall public service reform strategies, the implementation of specific components of reform programmes and the development of national capacities to sustain reform.

The initiative will be implemented in close collaboration with the United Nations, as well as bilateral and other agencies, including three pan-Commonwealth non-governmental organizations: the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM), a network of senior policy and decision makers in the public and private sector; the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), an organization which supports good governance at the local level; and the Commonwealth Network on Information Technology for Development (COMNET-IT), a network of institutions and professionals promoting the use of information technology and global networks in government.

In conclusion, may I once again thank you, Mr. Acting President, for providing this opportunity for us to share our experiences with the General Assembly and reaffirm our willingness and desire to continue to collaborate with the United Nations in this important area of public administration and development.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): In accordance with resolution 477 (V) of 1 November

1950, I now call on Mr. Ahmed Sakr Ashour, Director-General of the Arab Administrative Development Organization of the League of Arab States.

Mr. Ashour (League of Arab States) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I am grateful for the opportunity to address this Assembly. I also wish to commend the initiative taken by the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco and the positive response of the General Assembly to the call of the 1994 Tangier Declaration in devoting its resumed fiftieth session to the theme of public administration and development. Cumulative world experiences throughout the past five decades have proved that administration is one of the key elements, if not the most important element, in the development process.

The Arab Administrative Development Organization (ARADO), which I have the honour to represent, held its Ministerial Assembly meeting in November 1995 to prepare for participation in this resumed session of the General Assembly and to discuss the document prepared by the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance. The Ministers decided that a document should be prepared by our organization to express the common views of the Arab countries with respect to the theme of this resumed session.

Against this background, I would like to highlight some of the salient points made in that document, which has been distributed under the symbol A/50/918, and to summarize the needs and priorities of the Arab countries for strengthening the capacity of public administration in support of development.

The priorities and needs of the Arab region, to which the United Nations should give more attention and support, can be summarized as follows. First, there is the need to increase institutional capacity in development policy formulation and management. This is most needed in offices supporting the Cabinet and in the offices of ministers in charge of the economy, public finance, the governorates and private sector institutions. This would include creating decision support centres and strengthening them where they already exist, as well as strengthening the capacity of agencies in charge of implementing development policies and programmes, in addition to those associations and groupings representing the private sector and civil society. This would enhance their participation in policy formulation and implementation processes, as well as strengthen their ability to monitor and follow up these development programmes.

Secondly, there is a need to assist Governments in rationalizing and developing the structures, functions and work procedures of public agencies. Assistance is also needed to improve performance standards and strengthen the system of accountability by emphasizing the quality and effectiveness of public services and outputs and the efficient utilization of available resources.

It is important to strengthen the capacity of local government agencies since they are very close to the citizens' needs and can therefore interact effectively with them.

Fourthly, it is equally important to strengthen the capacity of the system of administration of justice in terms of human resources, equipment and information facilities. Effective processes for dispute settlement improve the investment climate and the performance of the private sector.

Fifthly, it is important to build and develop the capacity of administrative development agencies and to restructure their roles so that the required support can be provided at all levels of government and performance management systems in public agencies can be introduced and effectively applied.

Sixth, special priority needs to be given to rebuilding the capacity of Governments of some countries of the region that have suffered from conflicts and armed struggles, particularly in Somalia, Lebanon and Palestine, to enable them to manage development programmes in an era of peace and stability.

I am pleased to say that all these needs have been addressed in 10 distinct projects, as detailed in the ARADO document submitted to the General Assembly. These projects will guide the efforts of Arab Governments, their institutions, United Nations agencies and other international institutions in meeting their priority needs.

The Arab Administrative Development Organization commends and supports the recommendations and proposals of the Group of Experts, the efforts of the United Nations programme in public administration and the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly. ARADO particularly supports the recommendations made by the Group of Experts at a meeting held in this Hall on 11 and 12 April 1996, as well as the initiative taken by the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco in submitting the draft resolution

introduced by His Excellency Mr. Messaoud Mansouri, the Moroccan Minister, at the first meeting of this resumed session of the General Assembly.

Our organization wishes to submit for the Assembly's consideration some additional proposals and recommendations. Briefly stated, first, it is important to reinforce the role of United Nations agencies responsible for development and administrative reform. We particularly emphasize the role of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations programme in public administration because of their ability to provide effective support for institutional development programmes and to continuously adapt their programmes to a changing policy environment and the need for sustainable development.

Secondly, it is important for these United Nations agencies working in the fields of development and administrative reform to interact more effectively with the regional bodies that are more familiar with the needs, priorities and circumstances of the countries in the region. They are capable of diagnosing the problems in their respective regions and of identifying the most suitable practices. They also have their network of local experts capable of building local capacity. Given the right support, interaction with such establishments can build regional capacities, which, in the long run, will reduce dependence on international institutions.

Thirdly, it is equally important for the United Nations and other international and bilateral agencies to establish partnerships with their counterpart agencies in recipient

countries. Such partnerships would facilitate the sharing of experience and responsibilities between them. There is a real need to build a new model of the relationship between donors and recipients in order to strengthen the local and national capacities for continuing self-development, for learning from experience and constant evaluation and for measuring the improvements achieved in the performance of target institutions.

There is also a need for effective coordination of programmes offered by the United Nations agencies and other international and bilateral agencies concerned with economic reform and administrative development in order to achieve better coordination between them in their dealings with and exchange of expertise with recipient countries.

In conclusion, I wish to recommend that, in order to achieve the objectives of this resumed session of the Assembly, a permanent forum be established for identifying and propagating the best administrative practices and experiences and for facilitating exchanges of experience between States. Such a forum should collect, monitor and analyse initiatives taken or programmes conducted by various countries, in implementation of the resolutions to be adopted by the General Assembly. The results should be contained in a report, issued, for example, every two years, on the real implementation of administrative reform in support of development at the global level.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.